

# PRESS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Ralph Shannon, 57, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 46 months in prison, followed by a lifetime of supervised release, for possessing child pornography. Shannon pleaded guilty to this charge on April 20, 2007.

The charges against Shannon arose following a search warrant executed at his residence in March 2005. Among other things, law enforcement agents seized several computer hard drives. Analysis of the hard drives uncovered over 300 images of children engaged in sexually explicit activity, including at least one image of a child under 12 years old.

In sentencing Shannon, Judge Crabb noted that the production of these images involved the horrible abuse of children, and the continued distribution of these images over the internet would have an impact on those children perhaps forever. Judge Crabb sentenced Shannon to a lifetime of supervised release following his prison term, believing that Shannon's sexual interest in children made him a danger to the community and that such a sentence was necessary to protect the public.

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov/](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov/).

The charges against Shannon were the result of an investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Wisconsin Department of Justice - Division of Criminal Investigation. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Laura A. Przybylinski Finn.

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